

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 2009

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAS 2 AND 3 GARBLED)

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, US

SUBJ: MILTILATERAL AFFAIRS: RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

REF: (A) STATE 037591, (B) TEHRAN 1540

1. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS GIVE SUMMARY OF IRANIAN POLICIES ON
MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS KEYED TO SUBJECTS CONTAINED PARA 7 OF
REFTEL (A).

2. GOI MULTILATERAL INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES
PRIMARY IRANIAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS GOAL IS TO PLAY A GROWING ROLE
IN WORLD POLITICS, AVOIDING ISOLATION OF EARLIER YEARS WHICH LEFT
IT VULNERABLE TO PRESSURE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. GROWING MILITARY
STRENGTH IS SEEN AS ESSENTIAL IN THIS PROCESS. MOST ISSUES
IN WHICH IRAN TAKES DEEP INTEREST ARE THOSE OF BILATERAL NATURE.
TAKEN TOGETHER, BILATERAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH IN-
DIVIDUAL COUNTRIES IN WORLD AREAS OF GREATEST CONCERN TO IT
(E.G., PERSIAN GULF, MIDDLE EAST, INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL)
COMBINE TO DETERMINE IRAN'S
POLICY ON REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES. STILL, MUL-
TILATERAL POLICY OFTEN LACKS PRECISE FORMULATION. SHAH LAYS
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OUT GENERAL POLICY LINES, BUT STAFF WORK IS OFTEN HAMPERED

BY RELUCTANCE TO ADDRESS VAGUENESS OR INCONSISTENCIES. EXAMPLES ARE: (1) CAMPAIGN TO ORGANIZE A PERSIAN GULF SECURITY ARRANGEMENT, (2) IRAN'S PROPOSAL FOR AN INDIAN OCEAN COMMON MARKET AND SECURITY GROUPING, (3) GOI'S AUTHORSHIP OF MIDDLE EAST NUCLEAR FREE ZONE (MENFZ) PROPOSAL, AND (4) ITS SUPPORT FOR AN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE. IRAN HAS STAYED ESSENTIALLY NEUTRAL ON ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE, ALTHOUGH IN ITS PUBLIC STANCE IT HAS FAVORED ARABS. IT FULLY SUPPORTS UN RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND BELIEVES ARAB STATES SHOULD ACCEPT ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE. BEHIND THE SCENES IRAN HAS A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL, WHILE ITS RELATIONS WITH ALL ARAB STATES EXCEPT LIBYA RANGE FROM SATISFACTORY TO GOOD. IRAN IS GENERALLY WELL-DISPOSED TOWARD WESTERN POLICIES AND COUNTS ITSELF A PART OF THE FREE WORLD, BUT ALSO MAINTAINS WORKING RELATIONS WITH ALL COMMUNIST COUNTRIES EXCEPT ALBANIA, AND IS DETERMINED NOT TO APPEAR TO BE "IN OUR POCKET."

3. OTHER COUNTRY INFLUENCES

IN ITS WIDE-RANGING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, IRAN IS OBVIOUSLY SUBJECTED TO PRESSURES FROM VARIOUS GROUPS. AS NOTED ABOVE, IRAN'S POLICY IS PRAGMATIC IN THAT IT MAY HAVE FUNDAMENTAL IDEOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENTS WITH VARIOUS COUNTRIES BUT CONTINUES TO CARRY ON WORKING RELATIONS WITH THEM. THUS, IRAN COULD JUSTIFY VOTING WITH OTHER MUSLIM STATES TO FORMALLY CRITICIZE ZIONISM, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CONTINUING TO COOPERATE WITH ISRAEL IN INTELLIGENCE AND ECONOMIC FIELDS. ALTHOUGH OFFICIALLY OPPOSED TO SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID POLICY, IRAN HAS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND FORESEES FURTHER NAVAL COOPERATION WITH THAT COUNTRY AND WITH INDIA IN BEEFING UP REGIONAL STABILITY OF INDIAN OCEAN TO GRADUALLY REPLACE SUPERPOWER NAVAL PRESENCE THERE. IRAN RECEIVED PRESSURE FROM BOTH KOREAS DURING LAST FALL'S UNGA, INCLUDING HIGH RANKING VISITORS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES. AMBASSADOR, DCM, AND OTHER EMBOFFS MADE NUMEROUS APPROACHES TO SECURE VOTES FOR US POSITIONS AND COORDINATED THESE APPROACHES WITH UK, JAPANESE AND ROK EMBASSIES. EVENTUALLY IRAN REACHED COMPROMISE IN WHICH IT VOTED IN FAVOR OF FRIENDLY RESOLUTION, ABSTAINED ON HOSTILE RESOLUTION, AND ABSTAINED ON PROCEDURAL ISSUES. IN GENERAL, GOI IS PASSIVE ON MOST MULTILATERAL ISSUES, PREFERRING TO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND VIEWS CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM ALL SIDES BEFORE DEFINING ITS OWN POLICY. IT RARELY ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE OTHER COUNTRIES' POSITION ON MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS. THE MAJOR EXCEPTION WAS IRAN'S OWN PROPOSAL OF A MIDDLE EAST NUCLEAR FREE ZONE(MENFZ) FOR WHICH IT LOBBIED INTENSIVELY, GAINING FIRST EGYPTIAN CO-SPONSORSHIP AND THEN APPROVAL IN DECEMBER BY UNGA FIRST COMMITTEED.

4. INSTRUCTIONS TO DELEGATIONS

IRANIAN DELEGATIONS TO MAJOR INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ARE RARELY GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS IN DETAIL. THE REASONS ARE TWO: (1) DELEGATIONS ARE OFTEN HEADED BY HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY SECURED SHAH'S APPROVAL OF IRANIAN POSITIONS TO BE TAKEN, AND (2) IN MANY CASES PAUCITY OF EXPERTS AVAILABLE LEAVES NO ONE "MINDING THE STORE" IN TEHRAN WHO IS REALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ISSUES. IRAN'S DELEGATION TO UNGA, FOR EXAMPLE, IS NORMALLY HEADED BY FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY DURING THE OPENING SESSION AND FIRST FEW WEEKS AND THEN BY PRINCESS ASHRAF. THE FORMER IS COMPLETELY RESPONSIVE TO THE SHAH'S GUIDANCE BUT GIVEN CERTAIN TACTICAL LEEWAY, AND LATTER HAS SHAH'S EAR WHEN SHE WANTS TO SEEK CHANGES IN HER INSTRUCTIONS. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI ON KOREAN ISSUE, WE FOUND THAT FIRM OVERALL POLICIES SUCH AS VOTING FOR FRIENDLY RESOLUTION HAD BEEN MADE EARLY ON, BUT INDECISION ABOUT VOTING ON PROCEDURAL ISSUES CONTINUED UNTIL LAST MINUTE BEFORE VOTING. AT MEETINGS OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES OF UN AND AT OTHER MAJOR MULTILATERAL MEETINGS, DELEGATIONS OFTEN CONSIST OF ONLY TWO OR THREE PEOPLE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED, WHICH LEAVES MFA OFFICIALS IN TEHRAN UNPREPARED TO DISCUSS SUBSTANCE OF POLICY MATTERS, LET ALONE TO SEND INSTRUCTION TO THEIR SUPERIORS OR COLLEAGUES ON DELEGATIONS. ULTIMATELY SHAH DECIDES ON AND CONTROLS ALL FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS, OFTEN INCLUDING RATHER MINOR SUBJECTS. GOI IS OFTEN HAMPERED BY LACK OF PERCEPTIVE REPORTING FROM VARIOUS DELEGATIONS, WHICH ARE OFTEN SENSITIZED ONLY TO ISSUES DIRECTLY INVOLVING IRAN.

5. INDEPENDENT POLITICAL POWER

NO IRANIAN DELEGATIONS TO MULTILATERAL MEETINGS HAVE REPRESENTATIVES WITH ANY INDEPENDENT POLITICAL POWER. EVEN THOUGH FEREIDUN HOVEYDA, UNGA PERMANENT DELEGATE, IS A BROTHER OF PRIME MINISTER, HE APPEARS STRICTLY RESPONSIVE TO GOI INSTRUCTIONS ON ALL ISSUES.

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6. RECEPTIVITY TO US VIEWS

IRAN IS GENERALLY RECEPTIVE TO OUR POINTS OF VIEW, PARTICULARLY ON ANTI-COMMUNIST ISSUES SUCH AS THE QUESTION OF US TROOPS IN SOUTH LOREAN. ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO OTHER MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND TO THIRD WORLD, IRAN OFTEN WANTS TO BE COOPERATIVE AND TO AVOID SLAVISH FOLLOWING OF WESTERN POLICIES. ON THESE ISSUES IRAN IS MUCH LESS READY TO DO OUR BIDDING. FOR EXAMPLE, IRAN FULLY SUPPORTS CONCEPT OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, AND AS A LEADING OPEC MEMBER IT ARGUES FOR FAIR TREATMENT OF ALL RAW MATERIAL PRODUCERS. GOI CLEARLY INTERPRETS OUR APPROACHES ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES TO BE A NORMAL ASPECT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN CLEAR ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT WE WOULD BE BETTER OFF IF WE FOCUSED ON A FEW MAJOR ISSUES AND DID NOT DRAW DOWN OUR POLITICAL CAPITAL ON MORE MINOR ISSUES TOO OFTEN

(THIS POINT WAS MADE IN REFTEL B). THE INITIATIVE ON MULTILATERAL
CONSULTATIONS IS ALMOST INVARIABLY OURS--GOI RARELY SOLICITS
OUR VIEWS.
MIKLOS

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